



Community Engagement & Volunteer Coordinator

This is an exciting opportunity for a creative individual to establish and lead a community engagement and volunteer programme in an important new visitor attraction in the heart of London.

In 2019, Bevis Marks Synagogue received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to restore the synagogue, the oldest in the UK, and create The Dangoor Heritage Centre. This project displays and interprets the synagogue's historic collection for the first time, and enhances visitor facilities. The S&P Sephardi Community established the Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation (BMSHF) to manage this project and the site's ongoing visitor operations. We are looking for a dedicated and enthusiastic heritage engagement professional to help make Bevis Marks Synagogue a vibrant place of worship that shares its unique story with a wider community of people of all faiths and none.

Bevis Marks Synagogue, completed in 1701, is the oldest synagogue in the UK and the oldest in continuous use in Europe. Its Grade I listed Wren-style design, well-preserved interior and fittings make it exceptionally historically significant. It is still a working synagogue with a community that has been engaged in the development of the new Dangoor Heritage Centre.

The S&P Sephardi Community's collection of objects, rich archive, and intangible heritage, such as music and traditions, offer a continuous record of Jewish life in Britain since the mid-seventeenth century. The collection is mainly silver and textiles and many items are of national significance, providing rare insights into the practice of Sephardi Jewish worship, and London's changing fashions and craftsmanship.

Visitors will be welcomed by volunteers and will explore the synagogue and Dangoor Heritage Centre with the help of an audio guide which includes insightful contributions from a number of members of the Bevis Marks community who have participated in the project. Volunteers will also engage visitors throughout the exhibition areas and support our events programme, shop and catering offer.

The construction project is set to be completed by early summer 2025, with the exhibition fit-out over the summer and opening is anticipated in autumn 2025.



The Role

The purpose of this new role is to build and manage a team of volunteers, who will be essential to support The Dangoor Heritage Centre's visitor operations, and to engage communities to ensure that they are at the heart of our activities.

You will recruit, train, motivate and support a team of approximately 40 volunteers for crucial roles: welcoming and engaging visitors throughout the site; ticketing and supporting the use of our audio guide; café and retail support and development; guided tours; event support; formal and informal learning support; administration, marketing and social media.

You will develop programmes to engage the community particularly focusing on older people and families. The project offers an opportunity to develop activities to explore the history and cultural heritage of the synagogue and Jewish festivals, engaging both the synagogue community and the wider community.

You will work as part of a Heritage team which includes the Heritage Operations Manager, Learning Programmes Manager, Learning Officer, Heritage Intern, Facilities and Security Manager and with the synagogue and S&P teams including the Bevis Marks Rabbi, and other community members. You will work with other colleagues to support learning and activity programmes for schools, families and adults.

This is an exciting opportunity to develop and deliver a vibrant programme that opens Bevis Marks and its heritage to diverse communities and ensures the site's financial sustainability for future generations.

Job description

Key duties and responsibilities

Key tasks include:

- Delivery of the Volunteer Strategy, for recruitment, induction, and retention of volunteers as set out in the Activity Plan.
- Day-to-day operational management of volunteers, including drawing up rotas and ensuring smooth management of the visitor experience.
- Induct and train volunteers so that they have the appropriate skills to support the visitor experience and project programmes, and fully understand BMSHF procedures, including health and safety.



- Record volunteer participation in line with National Lottery Heritage Fund reporting requirements.
- Develop a programme of activities for the wider community including outreach programmes and family activities, focusing on families and older people.
- Liaise with the Learning Programmes Manager to ensure that volunteers can fully support the formal and informal learning activities.
- Work with the Heritage Operations Manager to develop an engaging adult programme of talks, tours and events aimed at specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Collaborate with our artist-in-residence and other contemporary practitioners to deliver bespoke annual programmes designed to engage a wide range of audiences.
- Manage the Activity Plan budget for community engagement, volunteer recruitment, induction and training.
- Work with the Heritage Operations Manager and the Foundation trustees to fundraise for Activity Plan elements.
- Work with the Evaluation Consultant to develop and implement a range of quantitative and qualitative tools for measuring the volunteer profile, volunteer satisfaction and skills development, and visitor profile and satisfaction; collect appropriate data.
- Provide any documentation or evidence required by the National Lottery Heritage Fund or other funders.
- Manage a Heritage Intern funded in the first year by NLHF, and develop an ongoing similar programme.
- Duty management and key holding responsibilities on a rota with other members of the team.
- Undertake other such duties as required.



Person specification

This role is an exciting opportunity for an early to mid-career professional with experience in a similar role to shape, develop and implement a new community and volunteer engagement programme and to gain management experience.

Essential Experience:

- Experience of helping to deliver a project working with volunteers and involving a range of different visitors in a heritage, community, voluntary or social enterprise organisation
- Experience of managing volunteers
- Experience of effective collaborative working with external partners and stakeholders
- Experience of evaluating projects

Desirable Experience

- Experience of inducting and training volunteers
- Experience of managing community engagement and event programmes
- Experience of working on National Lottery Heritage Fund projects
- Experience of managing budgets
- Experience of EPOS tills

The post requires the following skills, knowledge and personal attributes

- Confident customer care skills
- Good standard of written and spoken English
- Passion for audience development, community engagement and collaborative working
- A great communicator with strong influencing and negotiating skills
- Able to contribute to a mutually supportive environment through seeing different perspectives and finding common ground
- Knowledge of best practice in volunteer management
- Understanding of GDPR compliance
- Organised and able to balance multiple priorities in a small team environment
- Computer literacy including proficiency in MS office and volunteer database management



As we are a new organisation, the emphasis of the job may change and your duties may be reviewed and updated, in consultation with you, to reflect the evolution of the organisation. You will report to the Heritage Operations Manager.

Summary terms and conditions

Hours: 37 hours a week. Two Sundays per month will be required, along with evening and Bank Holiday working as required by the needs of the business. Time off in lieu will be given for hours worked over the standard working week.

Holidays: 20 days plus 8 Bank Holidays. In addition staff will not work on non-working Jewish festivals (up to 13 days, but generally fewer). There will be no working on site on these days, or delivery of community activities offsite.

Salary: £35-38,000, dependent on experience

Probationary period: 6 months

Notice period: 2 months

Place of employment: based at Bevis Marks Synagogue, City of London

Bevis Marks Synagogue is a place of worship and is closed to the public on Friday afternoon (closing times vary between summer and winter) and Saturdays. It will also be closed on non-working days during Jewish Festivals when no work will happen at the site. We are an equal opportunities employer and welcome applications from all individuals. While staff will not be expected to follow kosher eating, only vegetarian food can be consumed by staff and volunteers on site.

A knowledge of Sephardi Judaism is not a requirement, but the successful applicant needs to be open to learning and understanding the S&P Sephardi Jewish heritage and religion.

BMSHF is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all staff, volunteers and external agencies to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure & Barring Service.

How to Apply

Please send a copy of your CV (no more than 2 pages) with a covering letter outlining your relevant experience for the role. Please include demonstratable experience, and address all the requirements of the Person Specification.



Please provide the names and contact details of two referees, one to be your current employer.

Please send your completed application to info@bevismarksheritage.org.uk

Deadline for applications: Wednesday 18 June 5pm

If you would like to have an informal discussion about this role before you apply please contact Dinah Winch, Heritage Operations Manager, manager@bevismarksheritage.org.uk.

You can find out more about Bevis Marks Synagogue through our website <https://bevismarksheritage.org.uk> or watching You Tube blogs by Rabbi Morris <https://www.youtube.com/shalommorris>

Appendix: Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation & NLHF Project

In 2019 the Spanish & Portuguese (S&P) Sephardi Community set up the Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation (BMSHF) to run a National Lottery Heritage Funded project and create a new heritage and learning centre. The project has allowed restoration work to the Grade I listed synagogue and will improve access to, and the interpretation of, this unique site and its collection. New staff and a dynamic activity programme will see a step change in operation and heritage management, with an ambition to increase the number of heritage users from 10,000 prior to the project to around 25,000 visitors a year. Crucially, the project will make the site more financially sustainable, developing income-generating activities sympathetic to an active place of worship, and safeguarding the heritage for future generations.

The conservation work on the synagogue has now completed and the fit-out of The Dangoor Heritage Centre is underway and due to complete in summer 2025 with opening planned for autumn 2025.



About Bevis Mark Synagogue: Historical Background

Bevis Marks Synagogue is the oldest synagogue still in use in the United Kingdom and is the oldest synagogue in continuous use in Europe and probably the world. It is Grade 1 listed; the fittings are remarkably complete and little altered from the original arrangement. Its intact Wren-style interior makes it a significant part of the architectural landscape of London, and it is regarded as the cathedral synagogue for Anglo-Jewry.

The Spanish and Portuguese Jews' congregation was the first Jewish community established in England after the Readmission in 1656. Their first synagogue was in a house in Creechurch Lane, near where Bevis Marks Synagogue stands today, and they purchased a burial ground at Mile End. In 1701 a new purpose-built synagogue was constructed on Bevis Marks. Joseph Avis, a master carpenter, was responsible for the building's design and has been linked with some of Sir Christopher Wren's churches. Gradually, the synagogue was surrounded by a complex of buildings offering a range of social services including alms houses, two schools, and an orphanage.

By the late 1800s, most of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community had migrated to the greener suburbs of West London. Bevis Marks Synagogue was in decline and a proposal was made to demolish the building and its surrounding institutions, to free up funds to create a new synagogue in Maida Vale (on Lauderdale Road, opened 1896). Thankfully, this proposal was halted in 1886, when the Bevis Marks Anti-Demolition League championed the heritage significance of the building and prevented the proposed demolition, with a campaign backed by William Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. A compromise solution

involved the demolition and redevelopment of the surrounding community buildings, replacing them with a small residential building to house the synagogue Beadle to support the ongoing operation of the synagogue, and a vestry building to the south.

The S&P Sephardi archive is continuous and remarkably complete from 1663 to the present day. Part of the archive is stored at the London Metropolitan Archives. The archive contains a variety of records relating to the synagogue's governance and administration, records relating to the synagogue's social, philanthropic and educational activities, records of births, marriages and burials and records relating to Sephardic congregations in Bordeaux, Barbados, Amsterdam, Venice and Germany.

The S&P Sephardi collection dates from 1656 to the present day, comprising ritual silver and textiles, Torah scrolls, prints and paintings. Many of the items are of national significance. They not only reflect the distinctive ritual practices of the community but offer a rare insight



into the changing fashions and craftsmanship of London and, due to the mercantile nature of the community, further afield.

The S&P Sephardi Community has a rich intangible heritage – minhag – passed down from generation to generation since the community's establishment in 1656. The customs, music and even ceremonial dress are a unique blend of Jewish traditions and English fashions and are completely distinct, having little in common with either the Ashkenazi or the North African/Eastern Sephardi communities. They only existed in other Spanish & Portuguese communities that were offshoots from Bevis Marks Synagogue (in London, Manchester, the Caribbean and United States) all of which have either closed or lost their tradition through discontinuity of community.

Today, in addition to Bevis Marks and Lauderdale Road synagogues, the community also has a synagogue in Wembley, as well as affiliated synagogues within the Sephardi Community. The community has expanded over the years, most significantly with the welcome inclusion of many Jewish people fleeing persecution in the twentieth century. Many descendants of the original Spanish & Portuguese families are still active members, with much pride devoted to this historical connection.

Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation: The Future

The Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation will reach out to a broad range of audiences of different faiths and no faith, through a layered approach to experiencing the site that both draws on the synagogue's unique characteristics and atmosphere and brings stories of people and communities to the fore in The Dangoor Heritage Centre. It will tell the story of how Bevis Marks Synagogue has been part of, and shaped, the Jewish community in London for over 300 years and has been at the heart of Anglo-Jewry, acting as a means of binding people together and providing spiritual support to the community. The Foundation will work towards changing attitudes towards Judaism and show the integration of that community into the wider city over many generations.

The ground floor of The Dangoor Heritage Centre will be the welcome area, with a kosher café selling light refreshments and a shop selling books and distinctive gifts. The basement will be a shared space between exhibition, learning and community uses and will show two AV films.

The important collection of silver and vestments will be displayed in showcases in the new George Weisz Treasury in the undercroft of the synagogue.

The interpretation in the synagogue will be light touch and will mainly be audio with an independent audio guide.

We will have an artist-in-residence programme with associated events and workshops.



Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation, EC3A 7LH, London
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